

# LEADERS GROUP

|                          |  |  |                    |
|--------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>Brighton &amp; Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant Progress Update</b> |  |                    |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | <b>4<sup>th</sup> September 2017</b>                                       |  |                    |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities &amp; Housing</b>       |  |                    |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>  | <b>Name:</b>   | <b>Emma McDermott</b>                      | <b>Tel: 291577</b> |
|                          | <b>Email:</b>  | <b>Emma.mcdermott@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b> |                    |
| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> | <b>All</b>   |  |                    |

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### Members Progress Report

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The aim of the community covenant is to encourage local communities to support the service community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community.
- 1.2 Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant was officially signed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 and a Civil Military Partnership Board (CMPB) was set up to focus on the overall aims and objectives of the covenant and help facilitate the provision of support to the local armed forces community.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary update on progress since the last update to Leaders Group in June 2015.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Leaders Group note the progress being made under the Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant; and
- 2.2 That the Leaders Group continue to support the ex and serving armed forces community in Brighton & Hove, including cadets and reservists, through the community covenant.
- 2.3 That the Leaders Group consider the recommendations detailed in the Local Authority Guide on the Covenant in section 3.2 overleaf, and agree for the CMPB to investigate a mechanism for collaboration at a sub-regional level, including joint meetings and action plans, applications for Covenant funding, training packages and a shared web presence.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

# LEADERS GROUP

## 3.1 Brighton & Hove Civil Military Partnership Board

The CMPB comprises representatives from the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Armed Forces organisations and charities, NHS, local community & voluntary sector and Brighton & Hove City Council. The board met quarterly between 2013 and 2016, and reduced to three times per annum in 2017. From September 2015 Cllr Michael Inkipin-Leissner chaired the board with Cllrs. Ann Norman and Tom Druitt as deputy chairs. At the time of this report, Cllr. Inkipin-Leissner had stepped down from the role as chair and Cllr. Warren Morgan had taken up the role.

## 3.2 Local Authority Guide on the Covenant 'Our Community – Our Covenant'

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the guide, published in July 2017, was written by the Forces in Mind Trust and Local Government Association Community Wellbeing Board<sup>1</sup>, and provides a picture of how the Covenant is being delivered at a local level. Research was carried out with a range of local authorities by means of surveys, reviews, 'deep dives', interviews with stakeholders and advisory groups.

For the purpose of the guide, local authorities are categorised between one and five; one being those places with a major armed forces serving and veteran presence, and five being places where the only presence comprises reservists and a veteran population of unknown size. Brighton & Hove falls under category five.

The guide also makes recommendations on the infrastructure required to deliver the Armed Forces Covenant. The table below shows the current position for Brighton & Hove:

---

### <sup>1</sup> Membership

Cllr I. Seccombe OBE (Chairman) Con Warwickshire CC, Cllr D. Coppinger Con Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough, Cllr G. Gibbens Con Kent CC, Cllr K. Glazier Con East Sussex CC, Cllr L. Mallinson Con Cumbria CC, Cllr V. Pritchard Con Bath & North East Somerset Council, Cllr E. White Con Leicestershire CC, Cllr L. Chilton (Sub) Con Derbyshire CC, Cllr J. Wallace (Sub) Con North Tyneside Council, Cllr S. Woolley (Sub) Con Lincolnshire CC, Cllr L. Thomas (Vice-Chair) Lab Bolton Council, Cllr J. McShane Lab Hackney London BC, Cllr L. Travis Lab Tameside Metropolitan BC, Cllr C. Burdis Lab North Tyneside Council, Cllr P. Bale Lab Cardiff Council, Cllr J. Meldrum Lab Lambeth London BC, Cllr R. Eden Lab Reading BC, Cllr M. Cummings (Sub) Lab Wakefield Metropolitan DC, Cllr A. Ali (Sub) Lab Lancashire CC, Cllr R. Moss (Sub) Lab Bath & North East Somerset Council, Mayor K. Allsop (Deputy Chair) Ind Mansfield DC, Cllr H. Grant (Sub) Ind Richmondshire DC, Cllr R. Kemp CBE (Deputy Chair) LD Liverpool CC, Cllr D. Huddart LD Newcastle upon Tyne CC, Cllr L. Nethsingha (Sub) LD Cambridgeshire CC

# LEADERS GROUP

| Recommendations  | Current position of Brighton & Hove Civil Military Partnership Board   |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | Yes  | No  |
| Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An elected member champion</li> </ul>  | ✓ Cllr. Ann Norman has attended AF Champion training   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An officer point of contact within the council</li> </ul>   | ✓ A designated officer within Communities Equality & Third Sector Team   |   |
| Collaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Covenant group that meets at least twice a year, which includes reps from military, charities, public sector, council members (In some places councils may wish to establish a mechanism for collaboration at a sub-regional level)</li> </ul> | ✓ The B&H CMPB currently meets three times a year and includes reps from military, charities, public sector, council members. There is scope to explore collaboration at a sub- regional level |   |
| Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A web page to support delivery of the Covenant</li> </ul>  | ✓ The council's website has a page supporting the covenant and a link to Sussex Armed Forces Network website   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clear public statement of what members of armed forces community can expect from the council</li> </ul>   |  | Currently this is not available   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A route through which concerns can be raised</li> </ul>   |  | Currently this is not available   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training of frontline staff</li> </ul>  | ✓ Training opportunities are advertised to staff via the Intranet  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A vehicle for reporting such as annual report, newsletter or group minutes</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual reports are available on the council's website</li> </ul>  |   |
| Vision and commitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action planning process i.e. action plan, timeline, minutes with recorded actions</li> </ul>   | ✓ Recorded meeting notes   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy reviews</li> </ul>   |  | To be actioned - review of special leave policy to ensure armed forces friendly |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enthusiasm and commitment</li> </ul>  | ✓  |   |

On the basis that Brighton & Hove CMPB have implemented some of the recommendations, areas not yet achieved will be considered as actions for the board during 2017-18.

# LEADERS GROUP

## 3.3 Community Covenant Grant Scheme

3.3.1 The MoD provides an opportunity to bid for funding under the Community Covenant Grant Scheme to support the armed forces community across the UK. The funding is for projects that respond to the needs of the Armed Forces Community and improve recognition of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Approval of bids are made at a national level, however applicants are encouraged to work closely with their local Covenant Boards to ensure that their proposed project is properly connected locally, responds to recognised need and does not duplicate other provision.

To date Brighton & Hove have been successful in bidding for, and supporting, grants under the Scheme for the following projects:

|  |
|--|
| Sussex Military Veterans Pathways to Independence<br>Date 2014 - Funding provided £40K<br>Pan Sussex Pathways information is available via the Sussex Armed Forces Network (SAFN) website  |
| Chattri Memorial Trust<br>Date 2015 - Funding provided £750<br>Replacement of PA equipment   |
| Sussex Armed Forces Network<br>Date 2015 - Funding provided £18,500<br>Armed Forces Champion Training including mental health awareness and design and implementation of complementary eLearning modules and two local awareness raising conferences |
| Brighton & Hove Carers Centre<br>Date 2015 - Funding provided £750<br>Integrating the military community project   |
| Brighton & Hove VE Day<br>Date 2015 - Funding provided £1,600  |
| VJ Day Commemoration Java Far East Prisoner of War Club<br>Date 2015 - Funding provided £600   |

3.3.2 In 2016 Brighton & Hove CMPB joined with a cross border bid group comprising Surrey, Kent, West and East Sussex and Hampshire councils. The group submitted a joint application under priority 3 of the Covenant Scheme “Strengthening Local Government Delivery of Covenant”. The proposals put forward in the application included:

- Strengthening the role of Armed Forces Champions within all tiers of local authorities through specific training.
- Specific training delivered locally for customer facing staff to help ensure that ‘every contact counts’ and issues are identified early, specific help is provided and effective referrals are made. (The proposal to improve training for front line staff would be developed further with the proposed bid being tailored to fit in with existing structures and systems - the idea being to integrate the learning into existing systems to ensure parity across the region rather than developing new systems)

## LEADERS GROUP

- Promotion and training of Service Champions within teams/business units who can maintain the awareness of the armed forces within all levels of the organisation. Ongoing support provided via a Peer Support Network.
- Awareness training for all staff of the needs of the Armed Forces community through an elearning package either as part of staff induction, or general training.
- Training of mentors to help support any newly recruited service leavers and reservists making the transition to civilian life. The training, which will be delivered mainly online, will give the mentors an awareness of the type of issues the armed forces face and how to help with signposting information.
- Developing an app to make it quick and easy for members of the armed forces to find the right support.

The bid for £321,000 was agreed by the MoD in May 2017. The two year project will be known as Forces Connect South East and will make it easier for servicemen and women, as well as reservists and veterans, to access healthcare, housing, schools, financial advice and support to find jobs.

The approach is expected to form a blueprint to help other council's improve support for the armed forces. Surrey Council will be project lead with Sussex Armed Forces Network taking an operational role to fulfil the criteria on behalf of Brighton & Hove. Brighton & Hove City Council will benefit from opportunities to access free training, elearning and champions training for front line and key staff to enable them to have a clearer understanding of the needs of this group and be able to signpost to support and guidance effectively.

### **3.4. Update on key areas of focus identified by the CMPB**

#### **3.4.1. Housing/Homelessness**

The CMPB continues to work with the council's Housing Team who were invited to the board to present and receive feedback on the Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Allocation Policy during their recent consultations.

MoD partners on the CMPB advise that armed forces leavers are provided with life skills briefings covering finance, education, savings for housing etc. and the message is given out that Brighton & Hove can be expensive to rent and buy property. Lewes, Hastings and Eastbourne were seeing higher numbers of leavers and housing applicants.

To help inform the MoD when providing briefings to armed forces leavers, East Sussex Credit Union were recently invited to present at a board meeting to give information on their services including savings, saver loans and prepaid card. Some of the financial issues identified for ex service personnel included proof of identity and address for opening bank accounts and getting credit; Letters of introduction from Trusted Intermediaries; money management skills – learning how to pay bills/managing on a monthly budget;

## LEADERS GROUP

and rent deposits as some private sector landlords now ask for six months in advance if on benefits or they consider a 'risk'.

### 3.4.2 Support to Reservists from employer policies

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support the armed forces and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employers that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the armed forces community and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

The council have recently submitted its application for the bronze award (July 2017). This means we pledge to support the armed forces; promote being armed forces-friendly and open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (including the wounded, injured and sick), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners

The council has updated their workforce equality monitoring systems to ensure that information on ex and serving personnel is captured. Workforce data is being reviewed during 2017 to ensure staff who are ex services or reservists complete the monitoring information so the council are aware of where support may be needed.

### 3.4.3 Raising awareness of the local armed forces and community covenant

In January 2016 the Chair of the CMPB wrote to groups across the city including GP surgeries, Faith groups, sheltered schemes and community and voluntary organisations to introduce and promote the board and the community covenant.

The council continues to organise and support events to raise awareness of the armed forces community in Brighton & Hove including Armed Forces Day and key events including those connected to the Centenary of WW1. These have included:

2016

- ~ India Gate commemoration (supporting The Chattri Trust)
- ~ Flag Raising Ceremony (to mark the start of Armed Forces Week)
- ~ Armed Forces Day parade and exhibition

2017

- ~ Flag Raising Ceremony (to mark the start of Armed Forces Week)
- ~ Support and advice provided to Blind Veterans UK to host the city's Armed Forces Day

Planned for 2018

- ~ Unveiling of two Victoria Cross commemorative paving stones
- ~ Armed Forces Day and Interfaith Service
- ~ Supporting the Royal British Legion - Children's event marking the end of the WW1 centenary period

# LEADERS GROUP

## 3.4.4 Sussex Armed Forces Network (SAFN) website

The website (hosted and maintained by the NHS Armed Forces Network which is a member of the CMPB) provides the link for on line information on the Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Community Covenant. This includes access to elearning modules covering mental health awareness and carers' awareness, and a range of factsheets covering education and training; housing; employment; mental health; physical health; rough sleeping and social care. <http://www.sussexarmedforcesnetwork.nhs.uk/pathways/>

## 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 The Civil Military Partnership Board has both statutory and community and voluntary sectors partners who disseminate information through their networks.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### 5.1 Financial Implications:

The resources to support the Covenant and associated activities will be sought through funding from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme. Staff costs for providing secretariat support to the CMPB is covered within the core salary costs of the council's Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team.

*Finance Officer Consulted:*

*Date:*

### 5.2 Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Civil Military Partnership Board is an advisory body, reporting annually to Leaders Group.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Date:*

### 5.3 Equalities Implications

Actions to promote equalities issues are prioritised in the vision and criteria for the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant.

### 5.4 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Actions to address crime and disorder issues will be considered as the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant is developed.

### 5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

Promotion of opportunity is prioritised in the vision and criteria for the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant.

### 5.6 Public Health Implications:

# LEADERS GROUP

Actions to address public health issues will be considered as the Brighton & Hove Community Covenant is developed.

## 5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The Community Covenant supports a number of council priorities within the Corporate Plan 2015-19 including Increasing Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Citizen Focused.

## 6. **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

6.1 No other options have been considered as this is a voluntary covenant signed by public bodies and voluntary organisations in conjunction with the Armed Forces.

## 7. **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 To keep Leaders Group informed and ensure higher support for the CMPB and its work with a mandate to pursue improvement to the board as outlined in this report.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. None

### **Background Documents**

1. Brighton & Hove Community Covenant Progress Report June 2015